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AADHAAR VOLUNTARY FOR DIGITAL LIFE CERTIFICATES

Authentication norms relaxed after pensioners complained of unreadable fingerprints and non-availability of Aadhaar cards

CHANGES IN BIOMETRIC ATTENDANCE SYSTEM

With this change, the onus is now on the organisations to offer alternative means for submission of digital Life Certificate under the Jeevan Pramaan scheme. Another notification of March 18 makes Aadhaar authentication voluntary for biometrics attendance systems used in government offices. Here too, offices will have to create alternative system for authentication

SANDES APP TO BE MADE PUBLIC SOON

- Govt has also made Aadhaar optional for users of the National Informatics Centre-developed instant messaging app Sandes
- Developed under Government Instant Messaging System project, Sandes is used by public depts for internal communications
- The app will soon be made available for the general public, too

150+
DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING NITI AAYOG, INDIAN ARMY, USE SANDES APP

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THE UPSWING

SECOND WAVE: IT'S HERE AND NOW IN K'TAKA

CM holds high-level emergency meeting; situation to be reviewed again after a week

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE much-feared second wave of Covid-19 has finally begun in Karnataka, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar declared on Sunday. He also stressed that people need to avoid gatherings, ceremonies, functions, parties and any sort of crowding for the next one or two months in order to prevent any sharp rise in Covid-19 cases.

A late-evening emergency meeting with Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, attended by Health Minister Sudhakar, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai, Primary and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar, Higher Education Minister C N Ashwath Narayan and Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Jawaid Akhtar, however, took no decision on lockdowns, night curfews or stopping of offline classes in schools and colleges, or any other restrictions. It was agreed to review the situation after a week when a call will be taken on stricter measures that may be implemented.

With the total Covid-19 tally at 9,70,202 cases, the state has lately been seeing a steady increase in the number of active cases (patients currently positive and under treatment) from 8,860 on March 15 to 13,493 cases on Sunday. The recovery rate too has been steadily sliding from 97.78 per cent on March 15 to 97.32 per cent on Sunday.

Bengaluru, which is driving the Covid-19 spike in the state, has been witnessing 1,000-plus additions in new cases on consecutive days with the city tally rising from 4,11,989 on March 15 to 4,17,672 on Sunday. During the same period, the recovery rate has dipped from 97.33 per cent to 96.68 per cent.

CONTINUED ON: P3

VIRUS LOAD RISING

On a day India registered its highest single-day tally this year, the Centre said six states are the worst-hit. A look

43,846 highest single-day spike in India this year

30,535 new cases in M'tashtra, followed by Punjab (2,669)

83.14% cases reported from ● Maharashtra ● Kerala ● Punjab ● Karnataka ● Gujarat ● MP

1,15,99,130 NATION WIDE TALLY

197 deaths reported in 24 hrs

86.8% deaths from the above six states

38 succumb in Punjab

92 casualties in Maharashtra

B'LURU CASE LOAD 1,039 Test +ve on Sunday | 782 Discharged | 1 Death

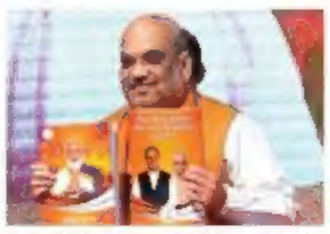
Slew of freebies to woo women in BJP manifesto

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kolkata

THE BJP on Sunday sought to woo women voters in a big way, by promising 33% reservation in state government jobs, free travel in state-run public transport network and free education from kindergarten right up to the post-graduate level.

The promises were part of its 62-page manifesto released by Union Home Minister Amit Shah here. The document also prioritised the implementation of the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act, saying it will be taken up at the first state cabinet meeting after coming to power. It also promised to give Hindu refugees a financial grant of ₹10,000 per year for the next five years.

"It is not just a manifesto but a resolution letter for West Bengal. It emphasises on women's safety, infrastructure development, better healthcare services and setting up industries in the state. The core idea is to build a Sonar Bangla," said Amit Shah.



Amit Shah releasing the BJP manifesto, at Kolkata on Sunday | BISHWAJIT LODH

The manifesto promises to give ₹18,000 to each of 78 lakh farmers in Bengal in one go under the Centre's PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. "The Bengal government deprived the farmers from getting annual grant of ₹6,000 for the past three years. After coming to power in Bengal, we will transfer the due amount of ₹18,000 in one go. Besides, the annual financial assistance will be increased to ₹10,000 from ₹6,000. Landless farmers will also be given ₹4,000 annual assistance," said Shah.

Eying fishermen, who form a considerable chunk of the electorate in East Midnapore, South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas districts, the manifesto promised a scheme to give ₹6,000 per year to each fisher family. Shah also announced that if the party wrests power, three AIIMS will be set up in north Bengal, Junglemahal and Sunderabans.

Shah announced a special investigation team will be set up to probe all political killings, adding victim families will get ₹25 lakh relief irrespective of political allegiance. P7

Ashoka varsity admits to lapses

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

Days after the resignation of political commentator Pratap Bhanu Mehta and economist Arvind Subramanian from Ashoka University, the institution admitted to lapses in its processes on Sunday. Its chancellor said the university remained committed to academic freedom and its board head promised an open line of communication.

As for Mehta, he wrote to the students urging them to not press for his return, pointing out that the circumstances that led to his resignation will not change in the foreseeable future.

Mehta recently stepped down as professor saying the founders made it clear that his association with the institution was a 'political liability'. Subramanian resigned two days later. "We acknowledge that there have been some lapses in institutional processes which we will work to rectify in consultation with all stakeholders. This will reaffirm our commitment to academic autonomy and freedom which have always been at the core of the Ashoka University ideals," the institution said in a statement that was jointly issued by the university chancellor, vice-chancellor and the chairman of Board of Trustees, along with Mehta and Subramanian. P7

No interference in academic freedom: Chancellor

In his separate letter, chancellor Rudrangshu Mukherjee wrote, "the founders have never interfered with academic freedom: faculty members have been left free to construct their own courses, follow their own methods of teaching and own methods of assessment."

After Mansukh Hiren's wife alleged that Waze was involved in her husband's death, we decided to investigate it thoroughly

Sharad Pawar, NCP chief

Call on Deshmukh today, says Pawar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mumbai

A day after shunted out Mumbai police commissioner Parambir Singh outed Home Minister Anil Deshmukh's extortion racket, an embarrassed NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday admitted that the charges were very serious and required an in-depth probe.

With Deshmukh's future hanging by a thread, Pawar said the call will be taken by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray by Monday. Despite growing calls for his resignation, the NCP ruled it out. Pawar also tried to limit damage, since Deshmukh belongs to his party, by suggesting that a probe into the charges be conducted by supercop Julio Ribeiro. But Ribeiro rejected it, saying at 92 he was in no position to initiate a probe and in any case, it was the NCP founder who was the best person to do it.

"The probe must be done by Sharad Pawar himself. He is the head of the party. They themselves know everything and they should take action. They will have to do it now because people are fed up with all this," said Ribeiro, who has served as the Mumbai Police commissioner and the DGP of Punjab and Gujarat.

Saturday's letter bomb by Singh had accused Deshmukh of directing assistant police inspector Sachin Waze, who is at present in NIA's custody, to run an extortion racket to raise ₹100 crore per month.

Trying to deflect criticism from Thackeray and Deshmukh, Pawar claimed sought to blame Waze's reinstatement on Singh. "It was Singh who assigned sensitive cases to Waze. After Mansukh Hiren's wife alleged that Waze was involved in her husband's death, we decided to investigate it thoroughly," he claimed. It was only after Singh was transferred that he made the allegations, said Pawar. P7

12 SC 'informant' families face boycott over 2 years

SUBHASH CHANDRA N S @ Karwar

FOR almost two years now, 12 families of Yennemadi near Hirregutti village in Kumta taluk, belonging to the Scheduled Caste, have been facing social boycott — shockingly by their own community. Their crime: they are accused of informing the Forest Department officials about a few wildlife poaching incidents in which local villagers were involved.

My own community members even directed others not to give us any food or water, or even interact with us

Manjunath Haller, Yennemadi resident

Manjunath Haller, who has been the prime target of the villagers, said, "Sometime in 2019, some people had poached a sambar deer. This was followed by a few more cases of wild animals being poached. The culprits were later nabbed by the Forest Department. Following this, there was a debate in the village about who had informed the officials. I was targeted without even being given a chance to speak, and banished from the community," he bemoaned. "My own community members even directed others not to give us any food or water, or even interact with us," he added.

CONTINUED ON: P5

EXPRESS READ

India win both men's, women's 10m air pistol team gold medals

New Delhi: A dominant India claimed both the gold medals on offer by some distance in the men's and women's 10m air pistol team events on the third competition day of the ISSF World Cup here on Sunday.

'India's military 4th strongest'

New Delhi: China has the strongest military force in the world, while India stands fourth, according to a study by defence website Military Direct. The US, despite its big military budget, comes in at second, followed by Russia.

Future moves HC division bench

New Delhi: Future Group moved the division bench of the Delhi HC against an order passed by the single-member bench, which has directed to stay its ₹24,713 crore deal with Reliance to sell its retail and wholesale business.

WITH THIS ISSUE edex THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST — 32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF edex (TABLOID) AND 4 OF CITY EXPRESS

CM EXAM

Blame self for few kids, less ration: Rawat

VINEET UPADHYAY @ Dehradun

NEW Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat's foot-in-the-mouth moments continued to grow on Sunday, as he berated jealous people with planned families for taking home lesser free ration.

"Now brother, who is to blame for this? He produced 20 (children) and you produced only two. So he gets a quintal of ration. When there was time, you produced only two and not 20. Now why this jealousy?" the CM reasoned while dwelling on the ration scheme in his speech in Nainital to mark the World Forestry Day.

He said the government provided 5 kg of high quality rice per person and those with 20 in the family took home 100 kg during the pandemic.

Rawat also erroneously blamed the US, instead of the UK, for 200 years of rule in India. "America, which enslaved us for 200 years and ruled the whole world, it is struggling at present to manage Covid," was his second nugget.

By his count, the Covid mortality figure in the US currently stands at 50 lakh, while the actual toll is 5.4 lakh.

Ripped jeans

Last week, Rawat had criticised women wearing ripped jeans, wondering what values they would impart to children. A huge backlash later forced him to apologise

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